land for such non-forest purposes is permitted only after careful examination of the proposal and available alternatives to the project. Suitable safeguards, inculding compensatory afforestation are stipulated in accordance with the guidelines of the Ministry while according approval to such proposals.

Violation of Forests Conservation Act in Maharashtra

1131. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of Raigad land scam in Maharashtra where forest land was illegally acquired and later sold in the open market in violation of Forest Conservation Act; and

(b) whether the Union Government have taken any action against the erring officials of the Forest and Revenue Departments?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) and (b) The State Government of Maharashtra has been asked to send a detailed report in the matter on receipt of which suitable necessary action will be taken.

"Preservation of Forests in Gujarat

1132 SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some externally aided projects are being implemented in Gujarat for preservation of forests and forest wealth;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the results achieved therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) Yes, Sir

(b) and (c) A forestry project with external financial assistance from Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund, Japan is under implementation in Gujarat for preservation and development of forests at a cost of Rs.608 crores over a period of 6 years. The project envisages afforestation over 2,30,795 ha., distribution of 240 million seedling under farm forestry and conservation works in 24 National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries, besides improvement in research, technology upgradation, and extension activities. As on 30th September, 1997, afforestation work on 99, 806 ha has been undertaken besides distribution of 115 million seedlings under farm forestry. The work under wildlife conservation component is also under progress.

"Pending Pollution Related Cases in Gujarat Courts"

1133. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that more than 1500 pollution-related cases have been gathering dust in various courts in Gujarat for last more than 15 years or so and if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) the number of such cases in other States which are pending for more than 10 years; and

(c) the remedial steps proposed to be taken for early disposal of such cases?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDIN SOZ): (a) to (c) Information has been received from the state Pollution Control Boards. The details may please be seen in the attached Statement.